

Providing Leadership in Environmental Entomology

Department of Entomology, Soils, and Plant Sciences • 114 Long Hall • Clemson, SC 29634-0315 • Phone: 864-656-3111
email:dpento@clemson.edu

Southern Corn Rootworm

In South Carolina, this pest might be more accurately referred to as a corn budworm, for it is at this point where the damage is done. The worm eats directly into the bud of the plant, just above the root level, causing the bud leaves to wilt and die.



Southern Corn Rootworm Adult

Photo: Clemson University CE Series 40-1541

The adult of the southern corn rootworm is the familiar spotted cucumber beetle. It feeds on nearly any growing crop or weed during the early spring. Females lay their eggs in the soil near where they have fed. Larvae feed for about two weeks, then pupate in the soil.

Since adults show little interest in clean, bare land, injury can best be avoided by turning under cover crops at least 30 days before planting corn. Nearby fields should be kept free of weeds for 30 to 60 days prior to planting corn. While late planting might reduce damage due to this pest, it would tend to increase damage by other, more important pests.

There are several insecticides available for control of the southern corn rootworm. However, since the list of labeled products is constantly changing, and since available products varies from state to state, there will

be no mention of specific products. Labeled products should be applied in a band, centered over the row at planting, and incorporated lightly. Granular formulations are preferred. Chemical control of this insect is practical only where there is a history of economic losses due to its damage. With all insecticides, read and follow all label instructions carefully.



Southern Corn Rootworm Larva

Photo: Clemson University CE Series 39-1195

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Prepared by Donald G. Manley, Extension Entomologist/Professor, Department of Entomology, Soils, and Plant Sciences, Clemson University.

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EIS/AG-8 (New 03/1999).